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JOHN ROHRER

OF

LANCASTER COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA Pa.

A Paper outlining some of the results of  
a Research in the Records of Alsace,  
Switzerland, Lancaster, Pennsylvania,  
and Hagerstown, Maryland

made by

ALBERT L. ROHRER

Maplewood, New Jersey

1941







Benedikt Rohrer, Abt. Benedikt.  
Klosters Neresheim 1617



Röhr 1677



Rohrer I

Rohrer



Rohrer II



Rohrer III



Rohrer IV





## JOHN ROHRER OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Before we come to the main topic of this paper, let us give some consideration as to how the family name Rohrer originated.

In the modern sense the family is a small community formed by the union of one man with one woman and by the increase of children born to them.

Even primitive man sensed that it was incest to marry within kin, and soon found it a protection to adopt group names. The latter part of the Middle Ages found it desirable to go farther and specify or adopt family names.

Custom has universally decreed that a man shall be known by the name of his father, and that the wife on marriage adopt the surname of the husband.

The manner in which many family names came to be selected forms an interesting study in itself. Suffice it to say that there are four general groups: first, those derived from personal characteristics,--Long, Klein, Brown, White; second, those derived from trade craft or profession,--Carpenter, Smith, Fowler, Schneider, Fisher; third, those derived from personal names,--Johnson, Jameson, Danielson; and fourth, those derived from places where families lived, i.e., near high or low locality, or near certain objects,--trees or plants. To the latter, as we shall see, belongs the development of the name Rohrer.

For reasons which will be given later, our search for the origin of this name led us to Switzerland, to the Canton of Berne, and to the Archives in the city of Berne.

The Rohrer is a very old Bernese family. Records about it go back as far as 600 years, to the time when family names there were first used. The oldest written form is von Ror and von Rore. Ror, or rohr properly means a kind of several kinds of plants which grow on the moist or wet soil of marshy ground, known generally as reeds or bullrushes. Cattails we call them, the botanical name of which is Typhacea.

We are now to deal with the family which once lived alongside the place where these plants, the ror or rohr, grew.

In the Canton of Berne there are nine different localities known as Rohr. The most important ones to us are in Bolligen, a few miles northeast of the city of Berne, and also the parish of Biglen, about ten miles due east, because almost all the Bernese Rohrers originated here. A short distance from Bolligen my daughter and I inspected a flat, narrow valley about two miles long, which even today, with modern drainage methods, is too flat for cultivated crops; it is meadow land affording hay when seasons are not too wet. Formerly, this valley was largely covered by a growth of reeds, cattails, or rohr. Alongside on the higher ground were houses in which families lived who were known as the families of the ror or rohr. Gradually they were known as the von Ror or the von Rore. Then the "von" was dropped and "er" added, and it became Rorer. Rorrer and Rohrer, which was easier to say, just as the people said Berner instead of von Bern. We must remember that at that time there was neither a fixed orthography nor an official spelling of village, city and family names. The use of the letter "h" seems to have come into use in the later records, as has also the "er". A few records as late as 1490-1500 show the form von Ror, but from that time on it is Rohrer and Rohr.





In addition to Bolligen and Biglen already mentioned, we visited other ancestral Rohrer centers,--Habstetten, Vechigen, Krauchtal, Grosshochstetten, Worb, Rohr, and Langnau. (See map attached.) Two other centers were off our route for the day and we did not visit Gergensee and Munchenbuchsee. Rohrer descendants live in each of these towns. We were interested most in Habstetten, where we called on Christian Rohrer, eighty-seven years old, a retired railway worker.

The first known Bernese Rohrer of record is Chuono (Conrad) Rohrer, a wealthy farmer it seems, who lived in Habstetten. He is mentioned in two documents of 1340 and 1345 which refer to the fact that he cultivated a certain tract of land, the yearly rental of which he paid partly to a nun living in Berne and partly to that city. The document of 1345 also mentions a Johns von Rore, who was likewise a farmer living in Habstetten.

Many other interesting records of the early Rohrers were found, but to quote them would lengthen this paper unduly.

In the city of Berne there stands as the central figure of interest, the Minster, or Cathedral as it is sometimes called. The erection of it began in 1421 and it was finished 150 years later. Catholic at first, the Reformation changed it to Protestant in 1528. The interior is well preserved, with fine windows and some excellent carvings. In the north aisle is a monument to Burgomeister von Steiger, and on the walls about are tablets with the names of 700 Bernese men and 2 women who fell in the battle against Napoleon's troops in 1798. Among them is Sam Rohrer, village Bolligen. Samuel Rohrer died for his country in the war against France, and left a widow with three children, Hans, Elizabeth and Barbara. His widow received a pension of 100 francs per year until her death in 1811.

It might be well to note here that near the village of Habstetten is an old stone quarry from which came the stone used in the erection of the Minster. It is not too much to say that some Rohrers were employed on this work in the years following 1421.

Again, for reasons which will develop later, we wanted to find the date on which Hans Michael Rohrer (please remember that name) received a permit to emigrate to Alsace. When we explained our interest to the archivist, he said that it is not likely that Hans Michael was born in Switzerland because at that period it was not the custom to give two Christian names to a child. He was born in Alsace.

We were told further that there were no complete lists of the Bernese emigrants to Alsace. Such records are very sparse, because after the Thirty Years' War many emigrated without giving notice of their departure, as did the fugitives after the Farmers' Insurrection of 1653, and also the Mennonites when they were persecuted for their faith.

Whoever left the country in the regular way had to pay the government 10 per cent of the value of their property as a "leaving tax," so many emigrated secretly. However, we did glance over the records of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and the early eighteenth centuries and found the records of a number of Rohrers who had received permits to go to Alsace.

Some Rohrers were Mennonites. In a Justice Book of 1571 there is a reference to Anna Rohrer of Habstetten, who was a zealous Anabaptist and was tortured and compelled to emigrate.





"The Address Book" of the city of Berne today shows about sixty families of Rohrers. They are also found in other cantons of Switzerland.

Not all of the Rohrers came from Switzerland. Some of them came from Germany and are unrelated to the Swiss. The name originated there in exactly the same manner as in Berne, and likely at about the same time. The place of origin appears to have been in the Black Forest of Baden where there are low, narrow valleys, and in one or more of them the reeds or cattails grew.

We have met some of the descendants of the German families and learned that there is a village Rohr, also one Rohrbach in Baden where many live today, as well as in the Palatinate, where they have gained eminence. In the spelling of the name these folk are inclined to use the umlaut, so it is Röhr and Röhrer, and when it appears in our records here it is Roehr and Roehrer. We were interested to note that in the Swiss Rohrer records the umlaut never was or is used.

With this lengthy preface we now come to the topic of the paper.

When one attempts to search the records of John Rohrer, he is at once confronted with a perplexing handicap,--there were three John Rohrers who were contemporaries in Lancaster County, Pa., and two of them lived in Lampeter Township.

1. John Rohrer, who owned several tracts of land adjacent to the Big Spring in Lampeter Township, died 1771.

2. John Rohrer, of Conestoga Creek, Lampeter Township, died 1772.

3. John Rohrer, of Hempfield Township, died intestate, 1778.

It is said that No. 2 John Rohrer came from Switzerland and Strasburg Alsace. He may be the one listed in "Strassburger's Pioneers," who arrived in Philadelphia, August 24, 1728, by ship Mortonhouse, and a clerk wrote his name on one list as Johannes Roer and on another as Johannes Roar. He married Elizabeth Snavelly, and in his will written in "High Dutch," presented to Court June 17, 1772, and some time later translated but not recorded, he mentions his wife, Elizabeth, and sons, John, Isaac and Christian. It is said that other children were David, Henry and Magdalena. The witnesses to the will were Abraham Witmer and John Stouffer; the executors named were Jacob Hartman and John Witmer. The inventory, dated July 3, 1772, totaled 976 pounds, 17s 6d.

A deed dated October 8, 1763, shows the purchase of 570 acres of land along Conestoga Creek. Another deed of land to his heirs, dated March 6, 1773, indicates that he was a "kinsman" of Charles Christophel. No further trace was made.

The only record found of No. 3 John Rohrer is an inventory dated April 23, 1778, submitted by Jacob Moyer and Benjamin Barr, which totaled 710 pounds, 1s. 9d. This inventory was presented to the register's office five years later, January 4, 1783, by Simon Wittmer and Barbara Wittmer.

This John Rohrer may be the one on the Strassburger List who arrived in Philadelphia on November 3, 1750, by ship "Brotherhood."

No. 1 John Rohrer. On page 501 of "Harris' Biographical History of Lancaster County" there is a sketch which may be summarized as follows:

1. John Rohrer was born in Alsace, France, in 1696.

2. When he reached the age of fourteen years religious persecution drove the family from its home.





3. John was sent back to obtain some family belongings, was captured, and from that time on lost sight of his parents.

4. John escaped from prison and found his way to England, where he studied Veterinary Surgery.

5. Emigrated to America and settled in Lancaster County.

6. In 1732 he married Maria Souder (Sauder).

7. Some years later, being in Philadelphia and hearing of the landing of a ship, he went to the dock and recognized one of the passengers as his father, who was accompanied by his second wife and their sons.

8. After some years John aided his half brothers by buying lands near Hagerstown, Maryland, for them.

We now have the further information that John Rohrer was the son of Hans Michael Rohrer and Katherina Schwägler-in, whose marriage took place in Markkirch, Alsace, on June 6, 1688, and John or Johannes was their fourth child, born on May 13, 1696.

Markkirch is today known as St. Marie-aux-Mines, and its location is shown on the attached sketch map. It is in the Vosges Mountains and near it is the longest tunnel in France, over four miles long, whose completion required the work of 1500 men for nearly five years, and was inaugurated by President Albert Lebrun in August, 1937.

The record of this Rohrer family was discovered in the Church Book of "der Deutsch-reformierten Kirche von Markkirch von 1688."

Children born to Hans Michael Rohrer and Katherina Schwägler-in:

Hans Jakob	- May 15, 1689
Hans Michael	- April 15, 1691
Verena	- May 10, 1693
Johannes	- May 13, 1696
Anna Maria	- May 4, 1698
another Johannes	- Nov. 1, 1701
David	- Feb. 10, 1704

Died: Anna Maria, Sept. 25, 1701. 3 years 5 months.

Another marriage record was noted, that of David Rohrer and Elizabeth Chenal on February 20, 1696. This David and Hans Michael may have been brothers.

The old Rohrer family Bible, now in the possession of Robert B. Rohrer, has the entry that John was born in March, 1696. All entries were made in the same handwriting and evidently copied from some list. It is likely that John, in giving his birth, quoted from memory and did not recall the day of the month. Then, too, the difference between March and May is very small, so that the two dates are in fair agreement, and we can assume that the above is correct information about John Rohrer and his parents.

It is not known when John Rohrer arrived in England and when he left, nor the date of his arrival in America. Our theory is that having been in England for some years, and having been educated in the English language, he would naturally sail on an English ship from London. Most of such ships landed at the port of New York, where no landing lists have been preserved. If he landed in New York, he no doubt took the route of that day to Philadelphia, which was by sailboat to





Perth Amboy, then a fifty-mile trek to Burlington, then by rowboat down the Delaware River to Philadelphia. It is said that Benjamin Franklin walked that fifty miles in three days.

At any rate, he settled in Lancaster County and probably for a short period practiced his profession of veterinary surgery, although no evidence of it has been found. He, like other immigrants, was no doubt land hungry and soon gave his time and energy to the soil. Eventually he became a large landowner in Lampeter Township.

Sometime after March 8, 1733, John Rohrer married Maria or Mary Souder, daughter of Jacob Souder and his wife, Ann. She was born in Mannheim, Germany, on February 24, 1716. On the date of the marriage he was thirty-seven years and his wife but seventeen years.

Jacob Souder arrived in what is now Lancaster County sometime before May 16, 1719, for on that date he purchased a certain tract of land from Hans Graeff. He had two daughters--Mary and Susanna. The latter married Martin Funk. Jacob Souder died in 1737. His will, written in the German language and never translated, dated March 8, 1733, was presented to Court August 3, 1737. In the body of the will the name appears as Sautter. The witnesses were Felix Landis, Peter Jourdea, and John Rorer.

There are on file in the Recorder's Office two instruments which shed some light on the activities of John Rohrer. We quote several paragraphs from them. The first was dated March 25, 1740, but not recorded until May 22, 1797, and in it Ann Sowder "late wife of Jacob Sowder" deeds to John Rohrer and Martin Funk a certain tract of land.

"WHEREAS, the said Jacob Sowder by his last Will & Testament wrote in High Dutch, among other things therein mentioned, did order and appoint that the Tract of land & plantation whereon he then dwelt should be valued at Two Hundred & eighty pounds, and that his two Daughters, Mary & Susanna, should each have one hundred pounds and his wife, Ann Sowder should have eighty pounds and the Benefit of the said place three years after his decease, and after the said three years they the said Mary & Susanna should have it if they would.

"AND WHEREAS, the said Mary hath since intermarried with John Rohrer and the said Susanna with one Martin Funk and the said Term of three years being expired the said Ann hath delivered possession of the said plantation Tract of land & premises to the said John Rohrer & Martin Funk, according to the form & effect of the said Will....."

The second instrument was dated March 26, 1740, and recorded May 8, 1748. In it Martin Funk and Susanna, his wife, deed to John Rohrer the tract of land mentioned in the first instrument, and it is the earliest record found of his ownership of land

"THIS INDENTURE Made the Twenty Sixth day of March in the year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred and forty. Between Martin Funk of the County of Lancaster in the Province of Pennsylvania, yeom. and Susanna, his wife, one of the Daughters of Jacob Sowder, late of Lampeter in the County and Province aforesaid, deceased, of the one part and John Rorer of the Township of Lampeter aforesaid, of the other part.





"WHEREAS, Hans Graeff of the Province aforesaid and Susanna his wife, by their Deed Poll under their hands and seals duly executed bearing date the sixteenth day of May Anno Domini, 1719, for the considerations therein mentioned did grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto the aforesaid Jacob Sowder, a certain tract or parcel of land, situate and lying in that part of the County of Chester, now called the County of Lancaster.

"BEGINNING at a Black Oak a corner of John Rudolph Bundly's land, thence North by West by the London Companys land one hundred and sixty perches to a white oak, thence West by south by the land of William Hughs three hundred and eighteen perches to a Black Oak, thence South by East by vacant land one hundred and sixty perches to a White oak, thence East by North by Isaac Lefever's land, three hundred and eighteen perches to the place of Beginning. Containing three hundred acres of land and the usual allowance of six per cent for Roads etc. with all the liberties, privileges and improvements, thereunto belonging.

"TO HOLD TO HIM the sd. Jacob Sowder, his heirs and assigns forever, as by the said Deed. Recourse being thereunto had may fully appear. Which said tract of land and pmes the late Wm. Penn Esq. Proprietor and Governor in chief of the said Province by Patent under the great seal of the said Province and the hands of his Commissioners of property bearing date the sixteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1718, did grant and convey to the said Hans Graeff, his heirs and assigns according to the meets and bounds above mentioned as by the sd. Patent. Recorded in the Rolls Office in Philadelphia, in Patent Book A, Vol. 5, Page 316 etc. may appear.

"AND WHEREAS, the said Jacob Sowder being so seized of the premises as aforesaid, made his last Will and Testament wrote in High Dutch and thereby among other things, did order and appoint, that the aforesaid three hundred acres of land and plantation whereon he then dwelt, should be valued at two hundred and eighty pounds and that his Two daughters (viz) Mary Sowder, now the wife of the sd. John Rohrer and the said Susanna Sowder, now wife of the sd. Martin Funk, should each of them have one hundred pounds off their fathers Estate, and his wife Anne Sowder should have eighty pounds and the benefit of the sd. plantation three years and after the sd. three years they (viz) his aforesaid two daughters, Mary and Susanna, might have the said plantation when they would, as by the said Will bearing date the Eighth day of March, Anno Domini, 1733, duly proved in the Register General's Office in the County of Lancaster may appear, and soon after the Execution of the sd. Will the sd. Jacob Sowder died seized of the said pmes.

Hans Graeff was much older than John Rohrer, but a study of the records leaves the impression that they were close friends and associates in several endeavors. This, together with the fact that he was a very early settler in Lancaster County, makes him deserve more than a mere mention.





The spelling has been Graeff, Graff, Groff, and finally it became Grove.

Like the ancestor of John Rohrer, Hans Graeff was born in Switzerland and in 1661. Some years later, during the persecution of the Mennonites, he fled to Alsace, where he became known as Baron von Weldon, and bore a coat-of-arms.

He came to America in 1695 and lived for a time in Germantown, Pa. and then settled on Groff's Thal (Run) in West Earl Township, Lancaster County. It is said that he found that location while searching for strayed horses. He was pleased with that spot, and took up a tract of 1150 acres along that Run, which was conveyed to him on October 4, 1718. In 1724 he bought a tract of 250 acres from Martin Kendrick and Hans Herr. On November 18, 1737, Thomas Penn deeded to him a tract of 1413 acres.

On May 16, 1719, Hans Graeff conveyed title to 300 acres to Jacob Souder, father-in-law of John Rohrer.

At the time of his death in 1746, Hans Graeff was known as the wealthiest citizen in Lancaster County.

The family of John Rohrer and Maria Souder, as shown in the old Rohrer family Bible and by the other records consulted, is the following:

JOHN ROHRER, born May 13, 1696; married Maria Souder, born Feb. 24, 1716  
died Nov. 23, 1771 died May 11, 1769

CHILDREN:

1. Jacob, born June 26, 1734; married Magdalena Weaver.  
died April 19, 1803
2. Ann, born Feb. 2, 1738; married Jacob Houser.
3. Christian, born Oct. 23, 1741; married Lizzie Neff.  
died June 27, 1804
4. Elizabeth, born Nov. 17, 1744; married Franz Smith.
5. John, born March 18, 1746; married Maria Neff, born Aug. 16, 1752.  
died Jan. 10, 1814 died July 1, 1825
6. Maria, born Jan. 28, 1749; married John Baughman.
7. Martin, born Sept. 4, 1751; married Christiana ?
8. Susanna, born March 16, 1756; married Peter Nicholas Muller,  
died Nov. 23, 1815 born Dec. 28, 1742.  
died Dec. 28, 1831.

There is a manuscript which was deposited in the Library of Congress with the "Compliments of George Castor Martin, of Asbury Park, N.J." bearing the title, Genealogical Data Relating to the Rorer or Rohrer Family. One section of it is devoted to the Rohrer Family of Lancaster County and lists the children of John Rohrer and the names and dates agree with those given above, except that it omits Ann. It mentions two other children; John, born Feb. 2, 1738, died young, which is Ann's date, and David, the youngest, with no date of birth. (John and Ann may have been twins.)

John Rohrer died Nov. 23, 1771. His will (see Appendix II) December 1, 1768, and witnessed by John Mylen, Christian Forrer, and Jacob Weaver, was presented to Court, December 7, 1771, and on the same day Christian Hare and Jacob Carpenter qualified as executors of the estate.





The will makes interesting reading. It provides for the definite comfort and support of his "Beloved wife, Mary," and charges son, John, with that duty, but her death preceded that of her husband. Each of the eight children share in the estate; Martin's share is the "Plantation and Tract of Land in Frederick County, Maryland, containing 320 acres."

The inventory submitted by the executors on December 21, 1771, lists household articles, but the most important items are:

Bonds, Notes and Book Debts	1194 pounds	1s.	9d.
Cash	205	"	12" 7"
Cash	80	"	6" 8"
Total	1480 pounds	1s.	0d.

On September 6, 1774, John Hare, the surviving executor, reported to the Court that the cash on hand amounted to 902 pounds, 14s. 4½d., which, with a slight deduction for expenses, was divided equally among the eight children. No doubt earlier distributions had been made. Other documents are on file which show that certain adjustments were made in order to equalize the shares of the estate.

As one studies the various documents which refer to his activities, he is impressed that John Rohrer was a man of affairs and a leader in the community. His descendants should feel proud to think of him as the Patriarch of the "Big Spring Rohrers."

Some Rohrers were Mennonites, and it is said that he was of this faith, but we have found no evidence of it; his parents were not Mennonites.

Some Rohrers were Quakers. When the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania was in session on September 24 to 27, 1743, two of the men naturalized were John Rhora and Jacob Rhora, of Lancaster, and the record states that they were Quakers.

Again, when this Court sat on September 24, 1761, Jacob Rohrer, of Cocolico Township, Lancaster County, was naturalized, and the record states that he was a Quaker.

It is known that some Rohrers were Lutherans.

The search for the parentage of John Rohrer was prompted by a theory of the probable relationship between him and the writer's ancestor. Harris said that he bought lands near Hagerstown, Maryland, for his half brothers. The writer's ancestor was Samuel Rohrer, and he had a brother Martin. Both lived south of Hagerstown, and Samuel's farm bordered on the north the 320-acre tract known as Piney Hills Enlarged, which John Rohrer bought from John Swearingen on March 16, 1763, and which by his will he left to his son, Martin.

When Samuel Rohrer's first daughter was born she was christened Ann Houser, a singular combination of names to give to a daughter in that day, and it invited a study for an explanation.

We know that John Rohrer's first daughter was Ann and that she married Jacob Houser, thereby becoming Ann Houser. The inference is apparent. The half-brother, Samuel, was glad to express his gratitude by naming his first daughter for the first daughter of his benefactor.

The writer therefore claims that he has good grounds for his assumption that Samuel and Martin were the half brothers of John Rohrer.





Failing to make contact with descendants in Lancaster, even after advertising in the local paper brought but one response and that from a Rapho Township Rohrer, the writer felt the urge to go it alone and extend his research to Alsace to discover the parentage and place of birth of John Rohrer.

In 1931 he spent some time there, principally in the cities of Strasburg and Colmar, without results.

In 1934, in Berlin, while discussing the problem with an American business friend and a resident of that city for eight years, a plan for the search was developed. We obtained the services of a seasoned archivist whose organization had numerous contacts in Alsace. Our request to him was brief: "Search the records and find the birth of a John Rohrer who was born in 1696, probably in May." A large order because of its vagueness.

Much correspondence followed, and in due time the report arrived. Later the report was confirmed by the writer, who is tonight very pleased to place his findings before the members of this Historical Society.

Mention should be made of the fact established by our search in Alsace that the name Rohrer appears in the records of several places other than Markkirch, and almost always they carry the statement, "immigrated Swiss from Berne," usually referring to groups rather than names. These instances might be listed, but they would lengthen this paper unduly.

Quite naturally, the search in the Berne records followed the Alsace search.

As the beginning of this paper dealt with Rohrer history in general, it will be incomplete without a brief reference to the Rohrer coat-of-arms.

There is a great literature on the subject of Heraldry, and some of us Americans like to flirt with it, as it adds zest in the search for European ancestry.

The art of Heraldry has been very successful in Germany, where it flourished for centuries. The vast compilation by Siebmacher is evidence of this. Plants, leaves, and flowers form the main motif in many designs.

Early in the work we were led to accept the statement that our ancestor was German who bore a coat-of-arms as early as 1096, and that he was none other than "Knight and Crusader Johan von Rohrer."

Of course we were thrilled by the opportunity this would afford to search for European ancestry, but we soon discovered that we were inexperienced and gullible. A very elderly German Doctor of Philosophy told us that this John von Rohrer was an absolutely mythical person, for at that time (1096) there were but two known coats-of-arms in Germany, and that the Rohrer was not one of them. This doctor did say that centuries later there existed in the Palatinate a family, or several families, which bore the coat-of-arms with the reeds or cattails which we had described.

We were to see this good German doctor again, but he sickened and died. However, we did continue the search for a time and discovered those which are on display. They are all of German families, and it is to be noted that the reed or cattail is prominent on each design. A photograph of them is attached to this paper.





When the search led us to Berne, our interest in a coat-of-arms faded completely. Switzerland is distinctly a democratic country, especially the canton of Berne, where the bearing of a coat-of-arms has always been a mere hobby, except with a very few aristocratic families who once governed that country. A few farmers and rural tradesmen would sometimes adopt an emblem which never had any official recognition, and was only known locally. We found the record of a Christian Rohrer, who in 1763 was a gunpowder maker, whose emblem showed a powder horn and two stars. Some years ago a noted Rohrer family acquired citizenship in the city of Berne and received a high citation for achievement, which prompted them to adopt a coat-of-arms showing a mermaid with a reed or cattail on a wave.

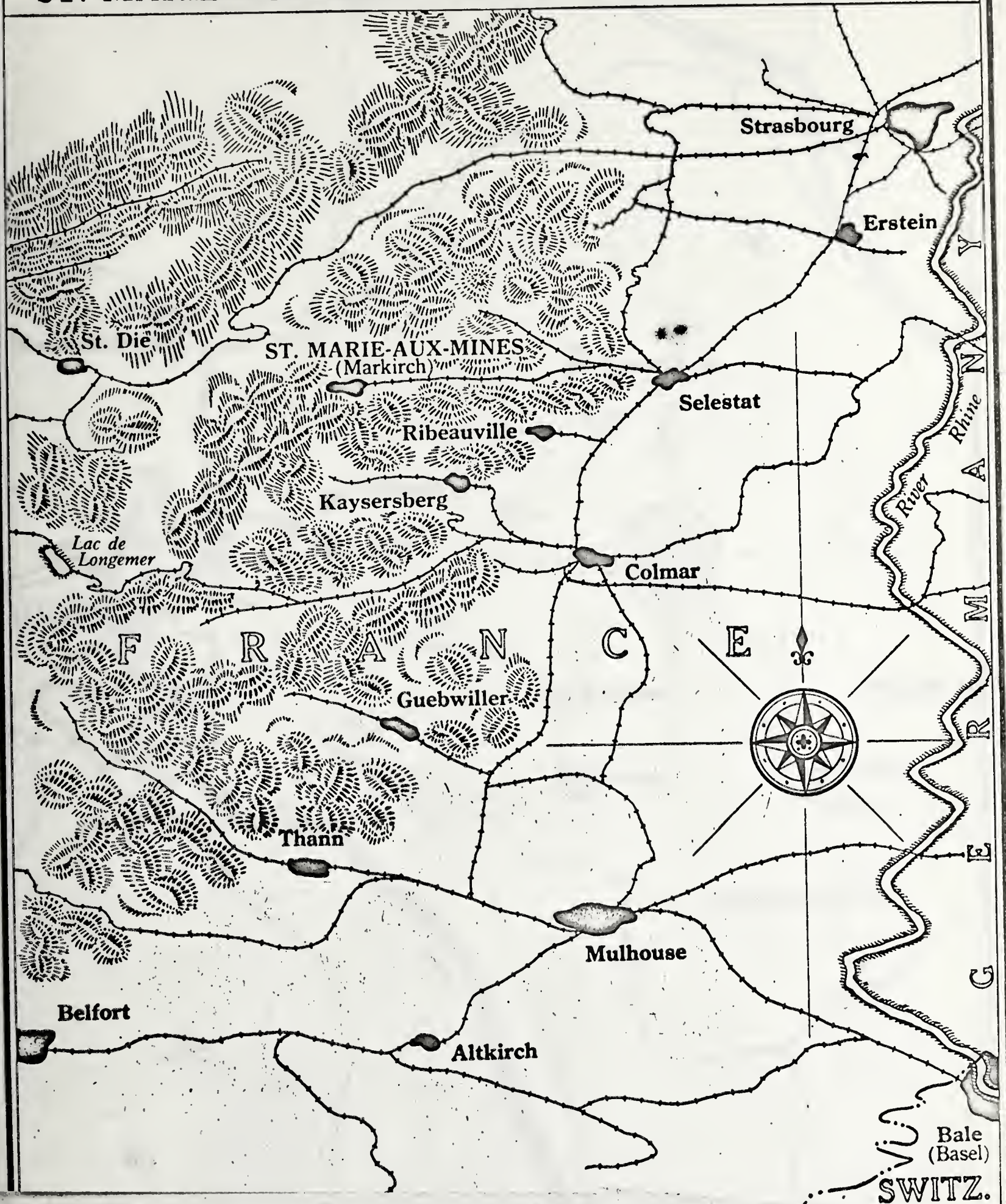
A coat-of-arms without the reed or cattail does not belong to the Rohrers.

The search in Switzerland revealed the fact that the Swiss Rohrers were and are very reliable and law-abiding people. They were not of the nobility, but they were noble in character.





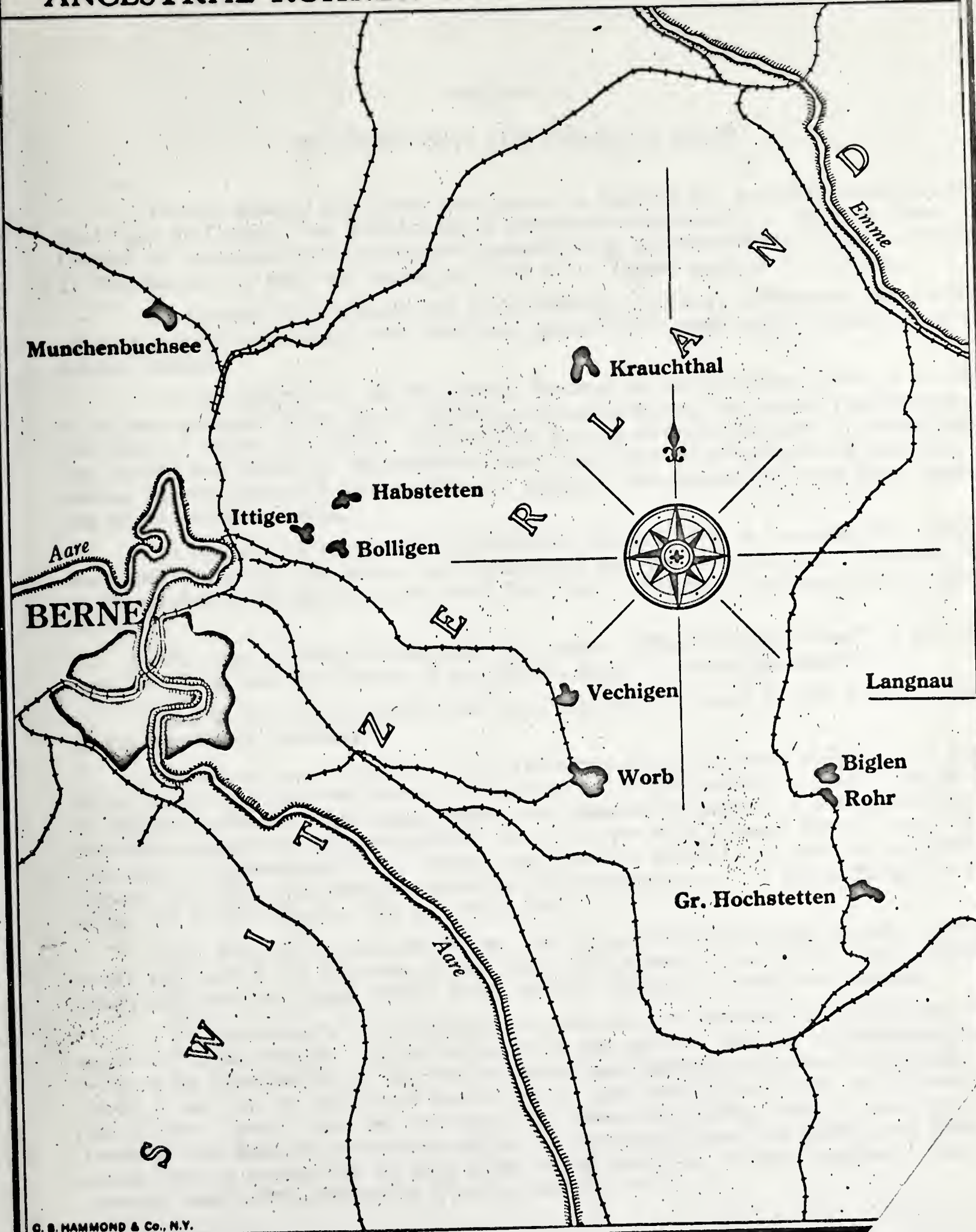
# ST. MARIE-AUX-MINES AREA - VOGES MOUNTAINS







# ANCESTRAL ROHRER CENTERS AROUND BERNE







## Appendix I

### THE PENNSYLVANIA LAND COMPANY IN LONDON

As John Rohrer had lived some years in England and probably spent some of that time in London, two possibilities have been mentioned: 1. That he first learned of Lancaster County through contacts with shareholders of this corporation. 2. That he was in some way connected with it or bought some of its lands.

We thought this speculation of sufficient interest to examine the records of this corporation, which was sometimes called the London Land Company, or the London Company.

In the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania there is on file a 31-page document which gives its plan of organization, rules and regulations. Its date is August 12, 1699. "An Act for vesting certain Estates in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, belonging to the Proprietor of a Partnership commonly called the Pennsylvania Land Company in London;" 220 shares of stock were issued and eight trustees named.

It appears to have been a profitable venture, for on December 24, 1720, it was reorganized and 880 shares were exchanged for the original 220. Several lists of shareholders are given which total 316, with individual holdings from 1 share to 142.

The name of John Rohrer does not appear. The "Meeting Place" of the trustees in London was the "House of Mr. Thomas Hyam," a large shareholder.

The statement was found that this corporation owned 47,800 acres in Lancaster and Berks counties.

There is also on file in this library a document which relates to a case heard before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, dated April 15, 1763. The group of eight trustees of the Pennsylvania Land Company in London is the appellant. Christian Stover is the respondent. It is a case of ejectment from a tract of 340 acres on Conestoga Creek. Appellant showed a warrant for 3000 acres dated January 20, 1737. Respondent showed a prior warrant for his tract dated April 3, 1719, for William Willis and won the case.

Two maps of surveys are shown, and in both the Conestoga Creek is prominent; 1150 acres are included in one map, 1398 acres in the other. The adjoining lands are those of Jacob Graft, Jacob Wander, John Henry Neaf and others.

In the issue of the Pennsylvania Gazette for December 4, 1760, there appears a "Public Notice" to the effect that the sale by auction of numerous tracts of land or "the Estate of the Pennsylvania Land Company in London" will begin on April 2 next at the Old Ferry House, Market and Arch Streets, and then describes the tracts. Among them are two tracts in Lancaster County, one of which is in Lampeter and Manheim townships, partly on Conestoga Creek and containing 2500 acres "now in possession of John Kirk, David Crawford, Andrew Barginer, James Paterson, John Rorer, Christian Staver, and others."



By the rules of its organization all land must be sold by auction. However, this did not prevent a previous understanding.

• This is the only mention of a John Rohrer found in the records. As this tract was located on Conestoga Creek and partly in Manheim Township, we have to conclude that the mention refers to No. 2 John Rohrer of Conestoga Creek, Lampeter Township.



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## Appendix II

### . WILL OF JOHN ROHRER

JOHN RORAH:

DECEASED :

To ALL TO WHOME Thes Presents Shall come know ye that I John Rorah of Lampiter Township in the County of Lancaster Yeoman being now weak of Body but of a Sound and disposing mind and Memory thanks be to God for the same and calling to mind the Certainty of my dissolution do make this my last Will and Testament Principally and first I Recommend my Soul to God that gave it and my Body to the Earth to be Buried in a plain and Christian like manner at the discretion of my herein After Named Executors and as Touching what worldly Estate it hath pleased God to Bless me with (my Just Debts and Funeral Expenses being first paid) I give and dispose of in the following Manner Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my Beloved Wife Mary Rohra the sum of One Hundred Pounds Penna. Currency to be paid to her immediately after my decease as also he Choise of my Riding my Riding Mares and one Third of all my Moveables the Said Sum of One Hundred Pound to be paid before any other division be made Item I give devise and Bequeath to my Son Jacob Rorah and to his heirs and Assigns forever all the Following Described Tract of Land being part of the plantation whereon I now live Beginning at a White Oak a Corner of Christian Yortees Land thence by the Same South by East One Hundred and Forty Nine Perches to a White Oak thence by other part of the said Tract North Eighty degrees West thence by other part of the said Tract North Eighty degrees West Seventy two perches to a Stone and South Eighty five degrees West Ninety Eight Perches to a Poplar and North Six degrees West Forty Nine Perches to a hickery and South Eighty four degrees West forty one perches to a Spanish Oak & North Six degrees West Forty Seven perches to a Stone thence West by South Forty Six Perches to a small Hickery Saplin Thencey South Twenty Three Perches & a half of a perch to a post Thence West bye South one Hundred and Twenty one Perches to a post Thency by Land of John Furra North by West Thirty Six perches to a post Corner of James Davis & Andw. Shultz's land thence by said Andw. Shultz Land and Tobias Cryders Respectively East by North Three Hundred & Sixty Seven perches to the place of Beginning Containing one Hundred & Forty Acres and allowance & be the same more or less according to the Meets and Bounds above mentioned which said piece or Parcel of Land I value and appraise to the said Jacob Rorah at the sum of Six Hundred Pounds of like lawfull Money of Pennsylvania Item I give devise and Bequeath to my Three Sons viz.: Jacob Rohra, Christian Rohra & John Rohra and to their heirs and assigns forever as Tenants in Common and not as Joint Tenants all the Following described tract or parcel of Land, Together with my mills thereon erected being part of my Said Plantation Whereon I now dwell Beginning at a Spanish oak a Corner of the above devised tract thence by the same North Six Degrees West Forty Seven perches to a Stone and West by South Forty five perches to a Small Hickery Saplin thence South Seventy perches to a Stone thence East twelve perches and a half to an Elm thence North Eleven perches to a Beech thence North Sixty degrees East Forty two perches to the place of Beginning Containing Fifteen acres be the same more or less which I value and appraise to them at the Sum of One Hundred & Twenty Pounds and my will is that Neither of my said Sons above mentioned Shall Seall his part of said Mills and piece of Land without first giving





his Brother or Brothers the Refuse of it at the Same price as a Stranger Item  
 I give Devise and bequeath to my Son John Rohra all the residue and Remainder of  
 my said plantation whereon I now Live Containing One Hundred and Forty five acres  
 be the Same more or less to hold to him his Heirs and Assigns forever which I  
 value and appraise to him at the Sum of Five Hundred and Thirty pounds he yielding  
 and paying thereout to his Mother Yearly & Every year During her Widowhood Sixteen  
 Bushalls of Wheat Ground & Delivered at the House, Six bushalls of Malt; Twenty  
 bushalls of Oats, Two Barells of Cyder, half barrell of Liquor, one Fat Hogg of  
 one Hundred and fifty pound Weight Fifty pound Beef, Sixty pound of Milled Hemp  
 and Six pound Wool, Firewood as much as she has need of Delivered at her Door and  
 The Fourth Row of Apple Trees from the South Side of the Orchard, the third part  
 of the garden and priviledge of the New Stone House to Live in and priviledge of  
 Stove Room Kitchen and Celler in the Old Home the one third of the garden and keep  
 her Mare and Cow in Fother and Pasture as his own, Item I give Devise and Be-  
 queath unto my Son Christian Rorah and to his heirs and assigns all that planta-  
 tion that I got of Charles Christophel Situate in Lampeter Township aforesaid Con-  
 taining one Hundred Acres be the Same More or Less which said plantation I value  
 and appraise at the Sum of Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds of Like Lawfully Money  
 Item I give devise and Bequeath to my Son Martin Rorah all my plantation and  
 Tract of Land Situate in Frederick Coty and province of Maryland Containing Three  
 Hundred & Twenty acres of Land to him and his heirs and assigns forever which I  
 value and appraise to him at the Sum of Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds of like Law-  
 full Money of Pennsylvania Item it is my will that all my estate both Real and  
 Personal (According as I have valued and appraised the same) after what is devised  
 to my Beloved wife) be equally divided to, and amongst all my Children Namely Jacob,  
 Christian, John, Martin, Ann the Wife of Jacob Howser Elizabeth the wife of Frantz  
 Smith Mary Rorah and Susannah Rorah in Share & Share alike And Lastly it is my  
 will that my said Sons which have the Lands as above mentioned shall pay out of  
 the same the over plus of their Shares in Reasonable Yearly payments as my here-  
 inafter Named Executors shall think Reasonable and I do hereby nominate Constitute  
 & appoint my Trusty & well Esteemed Friends Chrisian Hare & Jacob Carpenter whole  
 and sole executors of this my last Will and Testament Disannulling and making void  
 all other Will or wills by me made either in word or Writing Ratifying & confirm-  
 ing this & this only to be my Last Will & Testament. In Witness Whereof I have  
 hereunto set my hand and Seal this first day of December A.D. one thousand seven  
 Hundred & Sixty Eight, 1786

His

John x Rorrer  
mark

Signed Sealed published and Declared by the Testator as and for his Last Will and  
 Testament in presence of us the Subscribers who subscribed our names in his prst  
 and at his request

John Mylin  
 Christian Forrer  
 Jacob Weaver

Lancaster County: ss

On the Seventh day of December Anno Domini 1771 Before me the Subscriber  
 Personally Appeared the within Named Christian Forrer & Jacob Weaver two of the  
 Subscribing Witnesses to this annexed Will and on their Solemn Affirmation Accord-  
 ing to the Law did declare and Say that they were present and Saw and heard John





Rorrer the Testator within Named Sign Seal Publish Pronounce and declare the within annexed writing as and for his last Will and Testament and that the doing thereof he was of Sound and well disposing mind memory & understand to the best of their knowledge observation and Belief

Edw. Shippen  
Dep. Reg.

Be it remembered that on the Seventh day of December Annoe Domini 1771 the Last Will and Testament of John Rorrer late of Lampiter Township in the County of Lancaster yeoman deceased as proved in due form of Law and Letters Testamentary were granted to Christian Hare and Jacob Carpenter the Executors therein Named they being first duly qualified well and truly to administer the Estate of the Testator & do exhibit a true and perfect Inventory thereof into the Registers Office at Lancaster on or before the Seventh day of January next and do render a true and just Account of their Administration when thereto lawfully required Given under the Seal of the said Office.

Edw. Shippen  
Dep. Reg.

1802104



MEASURE















